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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]

DEAR EDITOR: In the January number of the JOURNAL a correspondent asks to hear from others about the housing of nurses, living, and registry.

The nurses of the New England Hospital Nurses' Club and Alumnae Association have solved this problem effectively, securing a comfortable home and good living at a minimum by coöperation.

First find out how many nurses are willing to take rooms. Having found out, before beginning, look up your house, which should not be too large—it is easier to add than to cut down. Select it in a location best adapted to your needs, either near your hospital or doctors, and a good car line system giving access to all points is very necessary.

Having looked up your house, find out how many are willing to enter the scheme financially, the fewer the better.

We are fortunate enough to have our house near the hospital (and also the property of our hospital), which was let to us at a minimum rate for the first year.

Eleven members volunteered the necessary sum of money to furnish and start the house, forming a stockholders' company with shares of from twenty-five dollars to one hundred each, amounting to six hundred and fifty dollars.

Out of this the parlor, six bedrooms, a reading-room, dining-room, kitchen, and laundry were furnished, and coal and kindling wood purchased. A telephone was put in with repeater. Other rooms are furnished as applied for. The officers consist of a president (from the stockholders), secretary, and treasurer, Executive Committee, advisers, and House Committee. Meetings are held monthly. A stockholder does not necessarily live in the house.

When living in the house, stockholders pay the same for rooms and privileges as any nurse.

Nurses are charged one dollar and fifty cents per week for a bed or two dollars and fifty cents per week when rooming alone (furnished); unfurnished small room, two dollars. The rents are collected by the treasurer monthly, and all running expenses, such as gas, fuel, laundering of bed linen, house rent, housekeeper's salary, choreman's wages, and such incidental expenses in connection with housekeeping are paid from these. Any surplus money is banked. We do not board the nurses; they board themselves, either individually or (where there are two or more nurses rooming together) collectively, thus reducing board to a minimum rate. The marketing is done by the nurses themselves. We get better food than when paying for board "and have what we want." Saturday nights we have a baked bean supper, which costs about five cents each. Such times as Christmas or Thanksgiving all the residents combine, securing a very good dinner at a cost of not more than twenty-five cents each. We have no servants, but a working housekeeper. Nurses take care of their own rooms when "in," the housekeeper giving them a thorough cleaning once a week and a general supervision when the nurses are "out." Our object is not to make money, but to pay the debt due the stockholders as soon as possible and turn the concern over to the association. The registry is taken care of by the housekeeper. The

rates are low and the money is turned over to the treasurer—one dollar per year to residents and non-residents. If it be a registry call, the patient pays one dollar for each nurse procured. These fees are used for all the needs of the registry and to pay the rent of the telephone. There are no profits. I would advise any body of nurses to try this plan. The house has been running now harmoniously and paying expenses for six months. Remember, we do not aim to make money.

It is hoped that the association will be able to buy up some of the shares before very long.

A. DILLETT, Treasurer,
New England Hospital Woman's Club,
13 Dimock Street, Boston.

DEAR EDITOR: Our Christmas at the John Sealy Hospital, Galveston, Tex., was celebrated in true Christmas style. On Christmas Eve we decorated the main hall and stairway with holly and evergreens, and in each ward we placed a Christmas-tree. The patients assisted the nurses in decorating, and the trees looked very gay and bright in the pretty trimming—tinsel, balls, and popcorn. For each patient we had a bag of candy, some fruit, two handkerchiefs, and a cake of soap.

The morning of Xmas Day at about six o'clock the nurses met in the basement of the hospital and walked through the halls singing carols—"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come," and other pretty Xmas songs. The patients seemed to enjoy this part of the celebration very much, and especially in the colored hospital it seemed to be appreciated. At noon a turkey dinner was served with ice-cream for dessert. Nuts and raisins were passed around to the patients who could have such things. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day—patients, nurses, and doctors. The following lines were written by a patient in the charity ward:

"Though Christmas-tree and holly branch
Are far beyond my reach,
I wish to send my Christmas gift
To the nurses all and each,
Who, when I lay upon my bed,
A pauper patient in a pauper ward,
Did all they could to ease my pain
And looked for pay unto the Lord.

"To them I wish to send my thanks—
A small and foolish gift, 'tis true;
But from my heart it issues forth,
It's all that I can do.
I have no mines in which to toil,
For yellow gold to delve,
So all the Christmas gifts I have
Are Christmas thanks from number twelve."

M. M. T.

[LETTERS to the Editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—ED.]